

UTILITY OF ARMY DESIGN METHODOLOGY IN U.S. COAST GUARD  
COUNTER NARCOTIC INTERDICTION STRATEGY

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MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE  
General Studies

by

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

## ABSTRACT

UTILITY OF ARMY DESIGN METHODOLOGY IN U.S. COAST GUARD  
COUNTER NARCOTIC INTERDICTION STRATEGY, by LCDR John B. McWhite,  
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This study investigates the utility of using Army Design Methodology (ADM) to help frame U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) counternarcotic strategy. The USCG published the *Western Hemisphere Strategy* in 2014, outlining the strategic and operational framework for USCG operations in the Western Hemisphere, addressing a ten-year plan to combat networks, secure borders, and safeguard commerce. This study focuses on the following questions: has the Western Hemisphere Strategy been effective, so far, in combating networks and securing our borders; and is there utility in adding ADM as a tool in developing future USCG/whole of government counternarcotics operations strategy? This study uses an applied professional case study research approach as the basis, which takes into account personal experience in USCG operations in conjunction with relevant sources in order to persuade policy makers about the rich and deep context of a setting associated with complex human issues where the goal is to take informed action to improve the situation. Drug trafficking organization operations and USCG interdiction tactics are dynamic and humanly complex, with multiple key players, stakeholders, and influencers. Ultimately, this research and analysis goal, is to validate/non-validate USCG current tactics and provide key decision makers with additional, increased interdiction options . . . or maybe more importantly, provide a recommendation for a better approach in defining the problem.

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## ACRONYMS

ADM	Army Design Methodology
CD/AMIO	Counterdrug and Alien Migrant Interdiction
CDM	Chief Decision Maker
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DoD	Department of Defense
DOTMLPF	Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leadership, Education, Personnel and Facilities
DTO	Drug Trafficking Organization
FAS	Feasible, Acceptable, Suitable
INCSR	International Narcotics Control Strategy Report
JCIDS	Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System
JIATF-S	Joint Interagency Task Force-South
LE	Law Enforcement
LEDET	Law Enforcement Detachment
MLEM	Maritime Law Enforcement Manual
TCO	Transnational Crime Organization

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### The United States Coast Guard Role

In November of 1787, Secretary of Treasury Alexander Hamilton wrote, “A few armed vessels, judiciously stationed at the entrances of our ports, might at a small expense be made useful centinels of the laws” (Hamilton 1787). Alexander Hamilton’s vision to extend the nation’s interdiction capabilities was logically based. The development of open ports accessible by sea increased commerce throughout the colonies but also increased the maritime vulnerability threat to smuggling. Hamilton’s strategic vision for the nation’s first maritime federal law enforcement (LE) capability was realized on 4 August 1790, when President George Washington signed the Tariff Act, authorizing the construction of 10 vessels and the training of their crews to enforce federal tariff law and deter smuggling. The year 1790 marked the birth of the modern day United States Coast Guard (USCG), and over two centuries later, the USCG continues to protect U.S. shores from outside smuggling threats. As smuggling threats continued to grow with increased funding, technology and complexity, it has become critically important to establish an applicable strategy to counter the growing threat.

#### Building Strategy

Prior to 2014, a typical USCG cutter commanding officer or LE boarding officer carried two LE reference manuals. COMDINST M16247.1, *The Maritime Law Enforcement Manual* (MLEM), and COMDINST 16247.4 /NWP 3-07.4, *Maritime Counter Drug and Alien Migrant Interdiction Operations Manual* (CD/AMIO), were and

still are essential as they provide the operational and tactical level guidance necessary for success in the conduct of counter drug missions. The MLEM gives overarching broad policy guidance, but is still referenced at the tactical level. The CD/AMIO, above all, has long been the primary reference for USCG and U.S. Navy tactical units conducting operations within the Western Hemisphere. The manual introduces drug shipment methods and AMIO smuggling routes, but its primary purpose is to provide internal guidance for conducting CD/AMIO operations. It outlines very clear legal authorities and thoroughly explains techniques, tactics procedures (both recommended and mandated in some cases) for tactical operational units “focusing on time tested methods found to be most effective” (DHS 1994, 1-1). In general terms it provides how-to conduct the five elements of maritime operations:

1. Using intelligence sources to target specific persons, vessels, and aircraft involved in the drug trade.
2. Patrolling to detect targets of interests (TOIs) using electronic, visual, and intelligence means.
3. Monitoring, tracking and handing of TOIs.
4. Intercepting, inspecting, and potentially searching vessels.
5. Apprehending suspects and seizing vessels and contraband (DHS 1994, 1-1).

It is important to make note of the MLEM and CD/AMIO as they serve the operational and tactical purpose for which they were designed. What they lack however, is a strategic approach to confronting the significant challenges involved with CD operations in the current environment. Over 10 years ago, former Commandant Admiral Thad Allen implemented the *Coast Guard Strategy of 2007* re-affirming the USCG as the lead maritime agency for high seas interdiction. Although it was not labeled as doctrine,

it was the first published strategic guidance with a focus on counternarcotic operations of the USCG/Department of Homeland Security (DHS) era. The strategy outlined a complex layered defense posture, which relied on the strengthening of maritime regimes, maritime domain awareness, and operational capabilities (Allen 2007, 15). It was considered the most applicable strategic doctrine for combating maritime smuggling. Admiral Allen's successor, Admiral Papp, continued building the strategic vision through the recapitalization of the aging USCG cutter fleet, with an increased "assets on the water and in the air" approach. As a result of the 2011 DHS White Paper, outlining the Coast Guard strategic framework for the 21st century, Admiral Papp published the 2013 *America's 21st Century Coast Guard: Resourcing for Safety, Security and Stewardship*. In his White Paper, Admiral Papp categorized the 11 USCG statutory missions into three maritime focuses groups: safety, security, and stewardship. Additionally, he introduced a three-prong approach to the strategic objectives of USCG operations: To protect those on the sea, to protect the United States from threats delivered from the sea, and to protect the sea itself. The security piece of this three-pronged approach is highlighted as it layered the foundation for the current Western Hemisphere strategy. The 2013 White Paper describes drug interdiction and ports, waterways, and coastal security as critical elements of maritime security with a call for an increase in available and deployed assets (boats, cutters and aircraft) to conduct patrols, interdictions, and illicit traffic seizures (DHS 2013, 4). Especially important to the future of USCG operations, was Admiral Papp's revisit to the concept of the offshore zone, where he clearly expressed where the USCG should operate. "to detect, intercept, and defeat threats well before they reach U.S. coastal waters . . . where bilateral agreements, with other countries in certain areas, give the

Coast Guard specific jurisdictions in foreign territorial seas to protect mutual interests and where major cutters patrol to ensure persistent law enforcement presence, and serve as Command and Control C2 nodes to coordinate the actions of the multiple response assets” (DHS 2013, 6).

As the USCG missions remained steady through the transition from the Department of Transportation to the DHS, the port and waterway security, drug/migrant interdiction and LE mission took center stage, and required a more detailed strategy moving forward. From Admiral Thad Allen (23rd commandant) to Admiral Zukunft (25th and current commandant) the strategic vision of the USCG matured into an actionable template for homeland security success. Within a relatively short time frame, the transition period between Admiral Papp and Admiral Zunkunft, a hand selected working group comprised of the top USCG policy, operational, and tactical minds met and developed the future strategy.

In September of 2014, the Commandant of the United States Coast Guard, Admiral Paul Zukunft published the USCG *Western Hemisphere Strategy*, a comprehensive strategy designed to “address transnational threats and maritime challenges that threaten the security of our Nation, markets, and oceans over the next 10 years” (COMD USCG 2014, 7). The strategy outlined three priorities within the region, specifically, combating networks, securing borders, and safeguarding commerce. The scope of this research will only focus on the first two priorities, as “safeguarding commerce” is a much broader topic involving multiple foreign governments and agencies, the private sector, and regulatory law (COMD USCG 2014, 8).

### Research Question and Analytical Approach

The USCG is almost three years into the *Western Hemisphere Strategy* decade. How effective has the USCG been in the implementation of the *Western Hemisphere Strategy*, and ultimately, how effective is the USCG in the interdiction of narcotics within the region?

Dr. Kenneth Long's applied professional case study research approach (further defined in chapter 3) is used as both drug trafficking organization (DTO) operations and counternarcotic tactics are dynamic with multiple key players, stakeholders, and influencers. An applied professional case study research approach will allow exploration of the effectiveness of the current USCG strategy (approach) to maritime interdiction through personal experience, analysis of factual data, and an applied comparison to Army Design Methodology (ADM). Finally, the findings will persuade USCG key decision makers at the operational (vice admiral area command level) and tactical (afloat commanding officers) of current performance. Operational and tactical options for increasing USCG's effectiveness are presented. The USCG operates in a budget-constrained environment and must remain resourceful and efficient. How can they best apply their resources through strategy, for maxim effect? Ultimately, the research and subsequent analysis goal is to validate/non-validate USCG current tactics and provide key decision makers with additional/increased interdiction options based on an ADM approach.

### Qualification/Personal Experience

I am a 2002 graduate of the U.S. Coast Guard Academy and have over 14 years of USCG commissioned active duty experience. I have served in USCG operational and

staff assignments at sea and ashore, conducting a wide range of missions in support of the maritime safety, security, and environmental stewardship interests of the nation. I have over nine years of sea time, having served on three USCG cutters as executive officer of USCGC *Alert* homeported in Astoria, Oregon; operations officer of USCGC *Dallas* homeported in Charleston, South Carolina; and weapons officer aboard USCGC *Dauntless* homeported in Galveston, Texas; deploying exclusively to the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific executing counternarcotic operations throughout the region. Additionally, I served three years as the officer in charge Law Enforcement Detachment (LEDET) Teams 101,106, and Training Detachment in San Diego, California, and deployed with the U.S. Navy in the Eastern Pacific, Caribbean, and Persian Gulf in support of counternarcotics and security operations.

Having participated in a wide range of USCG operations across multiple platforms (including partner nations) throughout the Western Hemisphere, I believe, the key to success is a well-established strategy that involves focus toward partnership and communications as well as an increase in aerial and surface collection and interdiction assets.

#### Assumptions

This research is based on two key assumptions: that South American coca producing countries will continue to export cocaine to the United States; and that the USCG and Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF-S) will continue to lead the effort in counternarcotic operations in the Western Hemisphere (JIATF-S 2017b).

## Exportation of Cocaine

A critical assumption in the research and analysis process is that the South American countries of Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia will continue to cultivate the coca bush in the production of cocaine for shipment to the United States. Understanding that not all (100 percent) of the cocaine produced in South America is destined for the United States (Europe and Africa bound shipments have steadily increased over time), it is assumed that all cocaine prepared for shipment via north Caribbean and Eastern Pacific maritime routes is destined for the United States. This assumption is closely linked to the next U.S. port theory, which is of critical importance to USCG offshore interdiction and LE authority, as it allows U.S. assets to position near the source countries and conduct LE operations well before the products approach U.S. shores. If the cocaine produced in South America and shipped via north Caribbean and Eastern Pacific routes was destined for the Asian or European market (never intended to reach U.S. shores), the United States could relax its forward leaning posture as operations deep in the transit zones would be efficient and even unnecessary. The next U.S. port theory helps shape the environment and provides for increased tactical interdiction options.

## USCG and JIATF-S Continued Efforts

As one of the 11 USCG statutory missions, it is assumed the USCG will continue to support the national counternarcotic mission, specifically in the Western Hemisphere. Additionally, with limited assets and funding the USCG will continue to research best practices to improve effectiveness, and will remained focused on counternarcotics interdiction success in the Western Hemisphere. In short, it is assumed the USCG will continue to make this a priority mission. Equally important is the assumption that JIATF-

S (DoD) will continue to advance in detection and monitoring capabilities and will continue to be funded and sourced at current fiscal year 2016 numbers. The USCG and JIATF-S share a symbiotic relationship where neither would achieve success without the other. JIATF-S leads all military and interagency counternarcotic efforts within the Western Hemisphere. Per JIATF-S mission statement, “JIATF South as a designated national task force, executes detection, and monitoring of illicit trafficking across all domains, and facilitates international and interagency interdiction to enable the disruption and dismantlement of illicit and converging threat networks in support of national and hemispheric security” (JIATF-S 2017a).

These two assumptions help scope the problem. Very simply, cocaine will continue to be shipped from South America to the United States, and the USCG and JIATF-S will continue to look into ways to interdict it.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Introduction

This chapter provides an executive level review of the key professional relevant sources, concepts, and theories referenced during this case study. The references selected represent a sample of strategy driving literature spanning from the past (2010) into the future, and help describe the current environment (state) and shed light on the potential desired end state—important concepts in ADM. The *United States Coast Guard Western Hemisphere Strategy* serves as the baseline doctrinal source for USCG operations, and the Army Techniques Publication (ATP) 5-0.1, *Army Design Methodology* will serve as the primary reference for ADM. Additional sources reviewed and addressed are:

#### Past

1. 2010 *Department of Homeland Security Counternarcotics Doctrine*
2. 2013 *America's 21st Century Coast Guard: Resourcing for Safety Security and Stewardship*
3. 2015 *International Drug Control Policy: Background and U.S. Responses*

#### Present

1. 2015 *Caribbean Border Counternarcotics Strategy*
2. 2016 *National Southwest Border Counternarcotic Strategy*
3. 2017 *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report. Volume 1: Drug and Chemical Control (INCSR)*

## Future

1. “Addressing the Southwest Maritime Border: An Interagency Task Force” (thesis)
2. “Pivot to The Homeland an Escalated Maritime Interdictions” (thesis)
3. USCG cutter after action reports (Eastern Pacific): USCGC *Steadfast*, Deployment Summary July 18, 2016-September 15, 2016; USCGC *Stratton*, Deployment Summary, October 28, 2015-January 10, 2016; and USCGC *Waesche*, Deployment Summary, February 28, 2016-June 15, 2016.

The Chief Decision Maker (CDM) and vested stakeholders this case study centers on will be identified, and the applied processes and models used to develop the recommendations will be identified and explained.

## Sources

### Western Hemisphere Strategy (Present)

The *Western Hemisphere Strategy* is a well-organized game plan for all USCG, sister service (U.S. Navy when supporting LE operations) and partner nation counter drug operations in the Western Hemisphere. The strategy outlines three priorities for the service within the region over a 10-year period from 2014-2024:

Combating Networks

Securing Borders

Safeguarding Commerce (COMD USCG 2014, 8)

The strategy defines each priority within a simple “offense,” “defense,” and “special teams” framing construct (COMD USCG 2014, 10). As previously mentioned the study will only focus on the first two priorities of the strategy, combating networks and

securing borders, which the USCG frames as “offense” and “defense” postures respectively (COMD USCG 2014, 10).

### Combating Networks: Offense

National strategic guidance outlined by former President Barrack Obama, directed a national effort to employ “all elements of national power to protect the citizens and U.S. national security interests from the convergence of 21st century transnational criminal threats” (U.S. President 2011, 19). By design, the USCG assumed an offensive posture in engagement with the network threat. “The Coast Guard maintains unique capabilities and authorities to detect and engage TOC networks in areas where they are not only challenged by other partners, but where they are also vulnerable to disruption . . . bridging traditional authority gaps between military and LE organizations, and maintains persistence presence in areas where other partners are unable to operate” (COMD USCG 2014, 28). With a concerted focus on operating in the offshore zone and areas not covered by partner nations or sister agencies and services, the USCG set out to accomplish three distinct lines of effort within the combating networks frame. The delineated lines of effort are:

1. Understand Networks and Fostering Network Culture
2. Identifying Networks
3. Targeting and Prosecuting Networks (COMD USCG 2014, 32-34)

### Securing Borders: Defense

Building on the layered defense concept, securing borders starts with down range efforts long before threats reach U.S. shores. This designed defense involves improving maritime domain awareness, prioritizing threats (“focusing efforts and resources toward

managing critical maritime risks to our borders, no matter where they are”), expanding partnerships and conducting extended offshore security operations. (COMD USCG 2014, 38). The defense is almost indistinguishable from the offense as it occurs far from U.S. shores, thousands of miles from the physical border.

### DHS Counternarcotics Doctrine (Past)

Published in June 2010, this document defines the counternarcotic mission as “interagency, inter-departmental, and international in scope” (DHS 2010, 1). With a primary focus toward the key components of DHS (U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the USCG, and the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement) the document presents and explains the five tenants of DHS counternarcotics doctrine:

1. Develop and maintain a comprehensive view of the illicit drug trafficking industry.
2. Establish and aggressively exploit robust organizational and interagency intelligence capabilities spanning the spectrum of disciplines.
3. Establish and employ an effective array of counternarcotics forces to counter the threat.
4. Maintain operational agility and anticipate the actions of our adversaries.
5. Collaborate with and support our federal, state, local, and tribal partners.” (DHS 2010, 1)

The overall theme of the doctrine is a team-based approach, solidified in collaboration, partnership, and sharing of information; however, it is very much directed internally to DHS components prescriptive as to what role each should play. The doctrine is authoritative, but requires judgement in application. DHS components and operating units therefore must apply the doctrine differently within the constraints of the established national and departmental goals (DHS 2010, 1).

### America's 21st Century Coast Guard: Resourcing for Safety, Security, and Stewardship (Past)

As previously referenced in chapter 1, this White Paper, published in 2013, outlines the strategic framework of the USCG, explaining how and why cutters, boats, aircraft, infrastructure, and systems are organized in order to protect the maritime domain. Commandant Admiral Papp (2010-2014) summarizes the document best in his introductory letter. “The White Paper provides an overview of CG roles, missions, tasks and resources, then describes how the CG employs authorities, capabilities and partnerships to accomplish its missions in support of DHS and national objectives” (DHS 2013, iii). Written to an external audience and designed to prove the value of the USCG, the document ultimately shapes internal USCG doctrine. Clearly defined operational zones (inland, coastal, and offshore) explain the USCG maritime security layer defense strategy, while the assignment of units, cutters, and aircraft provides insight into USCG operational task organization. Overall, this document is used as USCG doctrine that helps explain organization and leadership at the operational and tactical level.

### International Drug Control Policy: Background and U.S. Responses (Past)

This March 2015 Congressional Research Service report, prepared for members and committees of Congress, was written by Liana Rosen, a specialist in international crime and narcotics. In her report, Ms. Rosen summarizes the need for national drug policy, explaining, “drug use and addiction have the potential to negatively affect the social fabric of communities, hinder economic development, and place an additional burden on national public health infrastructures” (Rosen 2015, summary). She outlines the international drug policy framework and debate, as well as the U.S. counternarcotics

initiatives and foreign policy options, reiterating the need for diverse methods and strategies to attack the international drug trade. Of particular interest is the section of the report that pertains to combating the flow of drugs in transit, specifically on the high seas, where the USCG is the lead federal agency for interdiction operations. Additionally, the report highlights the importance of the DoD led interagency group, Joint Interagency Task Force-South (JIATF-S), and the critical maritime counterdrug bilateral agreements in which the U.S. government takes part.

#### 2015 Caribbean Border Counternarcotics Strategy (Present)

This comprehensive document is aimed at combating “DTOs and TCOs operating in and around the United States Caribbean border (including Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and the islets and cays surrounding those main islands) as they exploit the region as both a destination and transshipment point for illicit drugs shipped from South America through Central America to the Continental U.S.” (U.S. President 2015, 1). The strategy highlights an increase in Caribbean drug shipments, associating it to increased counternarcotic interdictions in the Eastern Pacific, enhanced enforcement efforts along the U.S. Southwest border, and increased violence in the Mexican/U.S. border cartels; all of which has potentially shifted smuggling to less troublesome routes in the Caribbean. With the increase in Caribbean activity, the strategy outlines six primary strategic objectives:

1. Enhance intelligence and information-sharing capabilities and processes associated with the Caribbean border.
2. Interdict illicit drugs and drug proceeds at and between U.S. ports of entry in the Caribbean.

3. Interdict illicit drugs and illicit drug proceeds in the air and maritime domains in and around the Caribbean border; maximize evidence and intelligence collection to support criminal investigations leading to associated and higher echelon networks.
4. Disrupt and dismantle transnational criminal organizations operating in and around the Caribbean border.
5. Substantially reduce the level of drug related violent crime in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.
6. Strengthen communities and reduce the demand for drugs. (U.S. President 2015, 3)

The study will focus on the maritime next U.S. port strategic goals, specifically the interdiction of drugs at and between U.S. points of entry within the maritime domain.

#### National Southwest Border Counternarcotics Strategy (Present)

Released in May of 2016, the *National Southwest Border Counternarcotic Strategy* provides an overview and update of the current and emerging threats at the border, while building on the concepts and themes presented in the previous 2013 strategy. Described as the primary entry point into the United States for all major illicit drugs, with the exception of controlled prescription drugs and certain synthetic drugs, the U.S./Mexico border is rich with criminal activity, poses a significant threat to the national security of the United States. Transnational crime organizations (TCOs) use the almost 2,000-mile border from California to Texas to engage in cross-border drug trafficking, human smuggling, weapons trafficking, money laundering, and other associated illegal activities (Office of National Drug Control Policy 2016, 1). The *National Southwest Border Counternarcotic Strategy* orchestrates a combined departmental, interagency, and multi-national approach to combating criminal activity associated with the border through six main concepts:

1. enhancing and expanding criminal intel and info sharing
2. securing the border
3. strengthening communities
4. increasing collaborative investigations and prosecutions
5. addressing the collateral challenges
6. engaging Mexico and Central American governments and law enforcement partners (Office of National Drug Control Policy 2016, table of contents)

2017 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, Vol. 1 (Present)

The INCSR, published in March 2017, covers January 1 to December 31, 2016 and provides the factual basis for the designations contained in the president's report to congress on the major drug transit or major illicit drug producing countries set forth in the Foreign Relations Authorization Act 2003 (Bureau for International and Narcotics Law Enforcement Affairs 2017, 2). Volume I outlines recent policy and program developments, USCG roles/assistance, chemical controls, and provides a comprehensive "country report" for over 75 identified countries (Bureau for International and Narcotics Law Enforcement Affairs 2017, 89). Volume II addresses money laundering and financial crimes and will not be referenced in this case study. The chapter on USCG assistance in Volume I is of particular interest as it describes the crucial role the USCG plays in "keeping dangerous narcotic drugs moving by sea from reaching the United States" with an overarching strategy to "increase maritime border security through layered offensive system that extends beyond U.S. land borders to attack the networks responsible for smuggling drugs" (Bureau for International and Narcotics Law Enforcement Affairs 2017, 43). Confirming the idea that illicit cargo shipments are most vulnerable when they are in concentrated bulk at sea in international waters, the INCSR

reiterates the value in surface/air tactical assets positioned in international waters, where they have the highest tactical advantage and opportunity for interdiction” ” (Bureau for International and Narcotics Law Enforcement Affairs 2017, 43). The document briefly describes USCG doctrine and best practices highlighting the ability of the USCG to take tactical control of U.S. and Allied assets for U.S. LE interdiction and apprehension. Additionally, it highlights the USCG’s effective bilateral agreements, their international training and technical assistance programs, and routine open sharing and communication with partner nations during counternarcotic operations. The section on the USCG in Chapter I closes with a summary of the year’s operational highlights:

In 2016, the USCG expended over 2,200 cutter days, 1,400 Airborne Use of Force capable helicopters days, and 3,100 surveillance aircraft hours on counterdrug patrols, and USCG Law Enforcement Detachments (LEDET) deployed for over 1,000 days aboard U.S. Navy, British, Dutch and Canadian warships. As a result, the USCG disrupted 263 drug smuggling attempts, which included the seizure of 172 vessels, detention of 585 suspected smugglers, and removal of 189 metric tons (MT) of cocaine and 22 MT of marijuana. (Bureau for International and Narcotics Law Enforcement Affairs 2017, 44)

In comparison, totals from the 2016 INCSR show:

In 2015, the USCG expended over 2,300 cutter days, 1,400 Airborne Use of Force capable helicopters days, and 4,000 surveillance aircraft hours on counterdrug patrols, and USCG Law Enforcement Detachments (LEDET) deployed for over 1,100 days aboard U.S. Navy, British, Dutch and Canadian warships. As a result, the USCG disrupted 228 drug smuggling attempts, which included the seizure of 145 vessels, detention of 503 suspected smugglers, and removal of 143 metric tons (MT) of cocaine and 35 MT of marijuana. (Bureau for International and Narcotics Law Enforcement Affairs 2016a, 46)

With a clear decrease in cutter days and available dedicated surveillance aircraft hours from 2015 to 2016, the USCG achieved a 32 percent increase in cocaine removal quantities (in metric tons). The goal of this study is to better understand why?

Addressing the Southwest Maritime Border:  
An Interagency Task Force (Future)

This master's thesis published by American Public University reviews the complex problems facing LE units and whole of government agencies at the southwest border, and presents a case for an interagency task force directed solely at the U.S. southwest border threat. Although the author does not completely agree with the need for an independent and dedicated southwest border interagency task force, the author's review of Munsing's and Lamb's comprehensive evaluation of JIATF-S and his assessment of the organizational traits that contribute to JIATF-S's success are appreciated. The study will build on the three variables presented that lead to JIATF-S success: purpose, empowerment, and support as they relate to the Army's concept of mission command.

Pivot to the Homeland: An Escalated Maritime  
Interdictions Approach (Future)

In his National Defense University master's thesis, USCG Captain David Ramassini (career cutterman, operations afloat) provides an overview of the TCO threat, highlights a few recent interdiction successes, and offers his recommendations as a stakeholder. Captain Ramassini, a prior USCG cutter commanding officer explains, "the USG should seek to maximize returns on investments through a commitment to an escalated maritime interdictions strategy" while leveraging national fleet resources, increasing operational security, and recapitalizing the fleet (Ramassini 2015, 38-41). In his conclusion he remarks, "the best defense against TOC networks is a layered, networked, and most importantly, present offense" (Ramassini 2015, 42). This thesis is

used as a representative stakeholder analysis of the feasibility, acceptability, and suitability of the recommendations.

#### USCG Cutter Eastern Pacific Deployment Summaries (Future)

USCG cutters generally deploy anywhere from 45days to 100+ days, depending on the size cutter and the operation assigned. USCG area policy requires cutters to submit (via official message traffic) a deployment summary upon completion of their deployment and return to their homeport. Although there is not a required deployment summary format, most cutters follow a general guideline that includes a recap and lessons learned from each cutter department (engineering, supply, and operations), and a personal note/way forward recommendation section from their commanding officer. For the purpose of this literature review, three cutter deployment summaries were selected from Pacific Area cutters that deployed to the Eastern Pacific in support of counternarcotics operations from October 28, 2015 through September 15, 2016. These formal summaries provide almost real time feedback from the fleet as well as future recommendations. These cutter deployment summaries, in conjunction with Captain Ramassini's thesis and recommendations, will serve as the basis for the stakeholder analysis.

#### Chief Decision Maker

The USCG is divided into two operational areas, essentially dividing the globe at the Colorado Rockies and just east of the Persian Gulf. The two areas are defined as Atlantic Area and Pacific Area. A USCG vice admiral (3-star) is assigned as the commander of each respective area and their duties and responsibilities are:

Commander Atlantic Area: operational commander for all USCG missions from the Rocky Mountains to the Arabian Gulf, spanning across five USCG districts and 40 states. In addition to his duties at Atlantic Area, he serves as Commander, Defense Force East and provides USCG mission support to the Department of Defense (DoD) and combatant commanders. He concurrently serves as Director, DHS Joint Task Force East, responsible for achieving the objectives of the DHS Southern Border and Approaches Campaign Plan throughout his joint operating area (Atlantic Area 2017).

Commander Pacific Area: operational commander for all USCG missions within half of the world that ranges from the Rocky Mountains to the waters off the east coast of Africa, to include the Arctic and waters within the Eastern Pacific. He concurrently serves as Commander, Defense Force West and provides USCG mission support to the DoD and combatant commanders (Pacific Area 2017).

The focus of the research and recommendations will be conducted toward a final way forward brief to the nominal USCG area commander.

### Stakeholders

Two primary stakeholders not only drive operational tactics, but also help shape policy and doctrine. The area chief of operations (USCG captain) and the individual USCG cutter commanding officers share a vested interest in government/USCG counternarcotics strategy, as they resource and physically conduct the mission.

Area Chief of Operations: The area operations division is responsible for overseeing, assessing, and directing (as necessary) USCG operations throughout theater. Operations include developing, implementing, and executing operational, crisis action, incident action, and contingency plans in response to incident management recovery and

response operations, and maritime LE and maritime homeland security events/incidents; and, developing and nurturing maritime stakeholder partnerships for statutory mission execution (Pacific Area 2017). The chief of operations is traditionally a post-command O-6 career aviator or cutterman with credible operational, tactical and staff experience.

Operations Afloat (Cutter) Commanding Officer: The commanding officer of an afloat unit is ultimately responsible for the safe navigation of the ship and the overall safety of the crew. The commanding officer also ensures the completion of all assigned missions as ordered by the area commander while task organized and under the tactical control of a USCG district, USCG sector, or JIATF-S. Missions and routine operations include but are not limited to: maritime homeland security, LE, drug interdiction, fisheries enforcement, search and rescue, marine safety and environmental protection, helicopter operations, or damage control. USCG cutters are the primary surface assets used by the U.S. government in counternarcotic operations; they have the ability to stay on station for extended periods and help provide the area commander with increased situational awareness.

#### Army Design Methodology

ADM is a critical thinking and brainstorming process that helps commanders and their staffs conceptualize complex problems. The process is used to assist commanders in understanding, visualizing, and describing unfamiliar problems and helps shape an operational approach for solving them (Headquarters Department of the Army 2015, 1-3). The ultimate goal of the design process is to ensure the CDM (and supporting staff) understands the problem and have developed a well-planned way forward. The most applicable definition of understanding in this context is, “knowledge that has been

synthesized and had judgment applied to it, in the specific situation in order to comprehend the situations inner relationships” (Green 2016). Within the ADM analysis process, available data becomes the what, information gained answers so what, knowledge applied helps the staff answer which means and final understanding results in therefore. By the conclusion of ADM, the CDM must understand the environment they are operating in (or will operate in), what the end state looks like, what in the current environment is preventing them from achieving that end state, and how they are going to accomplish the end state.

Although the Army does not define or mandate a specific method to conduct Army design, there are several core elements of the process, commonly referred to as frames. Commanders and their staffs break down the process into three primary frames. Framing the operational environment, framing the problems, and framing viable solutions ensures commanders and their staffs are able to focus on the most critical component of the process, understanding.

Framing an operational environment: The operational environment frame is divided into two concepts, current environment and future environment. It involves critical and creative thinking by a group to build models that represent the current conditions of the operational environment (current state) and models that represent what the operational environment should look like at the conclusion of an operation (desired end state) (Headquarters Department of the Army 2015, 1-4). This frame answers the questions: what is going on in the environment; and what do we want the environment to look like?

Framing the problem: As the commander and planning team gain an initial understanding of an operational environment, they shift their efforts to identifying and understanding those issues impeding progress toward achieving the desired end state (Headquarters Department of the Army 2015, 1-4). The problem frame answers: where, conceptually should we act to achieve our desired state; and what is keeping us from accomplishing that?

Framing the solution/operational approach: With an understanding of the operational environment and associated problems, the commanders and staffs consider an operational approach, the broad general actions, and means to solve/manage identified problems. It answers: how do we get from our/the current state to the desired state? In developing the operational approach, the commanders and staffs consider resources to support the operational approach and consider associated risk. The operational approach frame forms the basis for the commander's planning guidance used to develop an operations order or operations plan (Headquarters Department of the Army 2015, 1-4).

### DOTMLPF

DOTMLPF is an acronym for Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leadership, Education, Personnel and Facilities. This analysis methodology originated in the Army, but is used as part of the Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System (JCIDS). JCIDS is a capabilities-based approach process that identifies current and future capability gaps and the joint force's ability to carry out joint warfighting missions and functions. JCIDS forms the primary joint defense planning approach, examining where we are, where we want to be, what risks we may face, and what it might cost. JCIDS identifies capabilities needed to accomplish strategic and operational

requirements and is designed to provide systematic, integrated and interoperable materiel and non-materiel solutions to capability gaps and needs. Throughout the process, capabilities are investigated within the domains of doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, and facilities, representing the short title, DOTMLPF. Each DOTMLPF domain is an area providing focus for action/staff officers to investigate solutions, products, and services to meet the required capabilities delineated in DoD directives. The specific joint DOTMLPF capabilities approach analyzes future capabilities of potential adversaries, technological breakthroughs, and national posture, and attempts to develop concepts and requirements to counter those adversaries and take advantage of technology. For the purpose of the research (within scope), the joint approach was delimited and only the following three domains will be investigated in my literature review:

D - Doctrine development captures, in writing, the tactics, techniques, and procedures to be used

O - Organizational development produces the organizational design to carry out the doctrine

L – Leader development includes education and training programs designed to inculcate or enhance soldier and officer leadership effectiveness (Goyette 2016, 2-4)

#### Suitable, Feasible, Acceptable

Richard Yarger, former Army War College professor, offers three basic screening criteria to assess the validity of a strategy (Yarger 2016). The question of Feasibility, Acceptability, and Suitability (FAS) in context to strategy, aides the strategist in critically thinking about the logic or functionality of the strategy itself. It is important to note, the interrogative process of FAS generally takes place after risk has been evaluated, and

therefore the strategy is already determined to be viable. If the strategy itself can be viewed as the end state, FAS explores the ways, means, and ends associated with its accomplishment. Feasibility questions the ways and whether the manner of their use as described will accomplish the goal. Acceptability explores the use of the means aligned in the strategy and whether their use is justified in accomplishing the strategy. Suitability addresses the ends and whether their collective accomplishment will attain the strategic end state. In all, FAS helps the strategist question if the totality of the strategy makes sense. It explores the simple question: does/will this thing work?

When used within force management issues, FAS has been defined by practitioners in plain English as follows:

Feasible: can be achieved within reasonable resource constraints.

Acceptable: the concept can be supported by all major stakeholders.

Suitable: accomplishes the mission or meets the requirement within the framework of reasonable operations. (Long 2016)

This case study will focus on FAS within a force management construct.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY—THE APPLIED PROFESSIONAL CASE STUDY

#### Introduction

Dr. Kenneth Long, professor at the Army Command and General Staff College developed the applied professional case study approach, where both the researcher's professional experience and literature review are applied to a question, resulting in a recommended way forward. The first two chapters introduce the problem and initial recommendation, identifies the CDM and stakeholders who might be influenced by the findings, and provides a brief summary of the referenced literature. Chapter 3 describes the methodology of finding, ensuring the key elements of Dr. Long's case study research design are addressed and integrates the insights from literature into three recommended focus areas, specifically doctrine, organization, and leadership.

Case studies are appropriate and useful when the goal of the research is to inform or persuade policy makers about the rich and deep context of a setting associated with complex human issues where the goal is to take informed action to improve the situation . . . by addressing each of the key points of the design model [Dr, Long's Applied Case Study] the study makes a systematic, consistent and aligned argument for research design. (Long 2016)

Dr. Long describes 13 questions that should be addressed throughout the case study, as the answers to these questions form the fundamental key elements of the research design. The study did not progress through Dr. Long's questions as one might complete a checklist, and they were not addressed verbatim; however, the overarching concepts the questions represent are reflected in the analysis. The major concepts derived from Dr. Long's key elements, answer the questions why, who, and how.

## Why

The initial basis of the research, as noted in chapter 1, was twofold; to inform USCG key decision makers at the operational (vice admiral area command) and tactical (afloat commanding officer) level of current performance and to present operational and tactical options for increasing the USCG's counternarcotics effectiveness. Upon the conclusion of the literature review, it is unnecessary to provide an in-depth recap of current operational and tactical performance as the operational area commander receives a tri-weekly operations brief and personally reviews the cutter deployment summaries, observed hand written notes. However, having been removed from the USCG operational area and cutter fleet and through exposure to the focused U.S. Army Command and General Staff College curriculum, the author sees the value in taking an outside look at USCG counternarcotic operations while providing an informed recommendation for increasing USCG effectiveness through the application of an ADM approach.

## Who

The intended audience of the review is the (CDM, who is the sitting/acting vice admiral area commander as described in chapter 2. It is important to understand where the CDM resides in the overall USCG chain of command to better understand their concerns, range of policy decisions, and ultimately their span of influence. The two area commanders work adjacent to the USCG Deputy Commandant for Operations (DCO), who is also a three-star vice admiral, and report directly to the vice commandant/commandant (four-star positions). The DCO position is noted to highlight that he/she is "charged with developing and overseeing the execution of operational planning, policy, and international engagement at the strategic level" but does not have

direct influence over the resourcing, training or deployment of operational units (CG-DCO 2017). Area commanders have direct influence over when and how their units are deployed. The Atlantic Area commander and Pacific Area commander have similar responsibilities in that they are responsible for all USCG operations within their area of responsibility, which includes parts of the Eastern Pacific and Caribbean. Additionally, area commanders retain administrative control and operational control of their units when they are deployed. For example, a major USCG cutter homeported in Kodiak Alaska, reports directly to the PAC-3 (area operations) in Alameda, California and maintains the administrative control and operational control relationship even when that unit deploys on an Eastern Pacific counternarcotics deployment and shifts tactical control to JIATF-S. The CDM's concerns, similar to any operational commander regardless of the service, is how to best resource, train and use their forces. The USCG, above all, must also be extremely efficient, with limited funding and assets, the efficient deployment of USCG forces is absolutely critical. The research and analysis is geared toward the operational policy decisions that will assist the area commander in efficiently deploying his/her counternarcotic operational units within the transit zones of the Eastern Pacific and Caribbean.

#### How: Entering Methodology

As noted in chapter 2, the Army uses the DOTMLPF process to analyze capability gaps. During the literature review, 11 identified sources were categorized into three sets representative of three timeframes (past, present, and future) as it pertains to USCG/USCG counternarcotics policy and operations. Within each source, the focus was on applicable doctrine, organization, and leadership aspects that could potentially shape a

recommended way forward. An analytical review of the literature through each doctrine/organization/leadership lens spanning the past, present, and future timeframes, provides a conclusion about each category that once understood shapes an informed recommendation.

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS

#### Introduction

As I noted in chapter 2, the literature review focused on three capability domains related to USCG counternarcotic operations:

D - Doctrine development captures, in writing, the tactics, techniques, and procedures to be used

O - Organizational development produces the organizational design to carry out the doctrine

L – Leader development includes education and training programs designed to inculcate or enhance soldier and officer leadership effectiveness (Long 2016)

A thorough review of the selected literature, viewed through the D O L lens provides the base analysis (factual data) that can be related to personal experiences to shape a better-informed, updated, recommended way forward. Additionally, analysis of the counternarcotic operations problem through the ADM framework may present potential areas the USCG can improve their strategic process. Finally, the findings and recommendations will be fielded through a generalized stakeholder analysis to determine if the way forward is suitable, feasible, and acceptable.

#### DOL Applicability

##### Doctrine

The Department of Defense (DOD) is the lead U.S. agency for aerial and maritime counterdrug Detection and Monitoring (D&M) activities in the transit zone, and is supported by USCG and CBP assets in this role. The USCG is the lead Federal agency for maritime Interdiction and Apprehension (I&A) activities on the high seas, while USCG and CBP share this responsibility within U.S. territorial waters. (U.S. President 2015, 19)

Former USCG Commandant Admiral Papp, states the premise to successful maritime security and drug interdiction in his *America's 21st Century Coast Guard: Resourcing for Safety Security and Stewardship*. He simply states that maritime security is achieved through “protecting the U.S. from threats delivered by the sea,” and that drug interdiction is achieved through “deployed cutters, aircraft, and specialized forces who conduct patrols, interdict and seize maritime drug trafficking vessels” (DHS 2013, 4). It has long been established in the USCG’s sea going history to conduct interdictions at sea, but it is Admiral Papp’s remarks that solidify the concept in modern doctrine.

Additionally, Admiral Papp further defined the area of sea most tactically advantageous to USCG forces and interdiction efforts, as the offshore zone that “begins at 50 nautical miles from shore and extends outward, at times reaching across international waters and high seas to the territorial seas of foreign nations” (DHS 2013, 6). Offshore zone operations have become the mainstay for operationally deployed units, often on a routine cycle. Major cutters and even aircraft deploy to the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific following a scripted inport maintenance period, training, deployment cycle throughout the year. It is the ability to extend the U.S. reach into the transit zone, where the drug shipments are at their most vulnerable state that makes this tactic, doctrinally important in the development of counternarcotics interdictions strategy. The tactic is highlighted in the 2017 *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report*, “The overarching strategy is to increase maritime border security through a layered system that extends beyond our land borders. This system begins overseas, spans the offshore regions, and continues into our territorial seas and our ports (Bureau for International and Narcotics Law Enforcement Affairs 2017, 45). The physical surface asset is clearly the centerpiece of the layered

defense strategy as the USCG cutter (or U.S. Navy/Allied ship with embarked LEDET) is the only asset that can extend the borders into the transit or offshore zone. The deployed cutter is an integral piece of past and present doctrine and will continue to be moving forward, they “provide surveillance and intelligence capabilities in all weather and environmental conditions, and generate essential surface end-game detect-to-engage prosecution capacities” (DHS 2013, 12). It is doctrinally clear that USCG cutters will deploy to the Eastern Pacific and Caribbean in support of counternarcotic operations and that their deployment areas should be assigned in the offshore or transit zone, far from the U.S. shore in a layered defense posture. Additionally, and not surprisingly, the literature review sheds light on how the USCG should task organize and operate among partner nations in the combat of illicit narcotics trafficking.

### Organization

“In maritime security, a “Maritime Trident” of shore-based, maritime patrol, and deployable specialized forces combines with a highly integrated system of authorities, capabilities, and partnerships that link to the broader homeland security enterprise” (DHS 2013, 9). The USCG understands that the proper organization of their internal forces and alignment of USCG forces with partner nations is critical to success in counternarcotic operations. The two concepts (internal task organization and partner nation coordination/organization) will be reviewed in parts.

As noted in the previous doctrine section, a USCG interdiction surface asset is critical to counternarcotic operations as it provides the end game capability. Operating under Title 14 U.S. Code 89 (USCG Law Enforcement Authority), “the Coast Guard may make inquiries, examinations, inspections, searches, seizures, and arrests upon the high

seas and waters over which the United States has jurisdiction . . . and for such purposes, commissioned, warrant, and petty officers may at any time go on board of any vessel subject to the jurisdiction, or to the operation of any law, of the United States, address inquiries to those on board, examine the ship's documents and papers, and examine, inspect, and search the vessel and use all necessary force to compel compliance" (U.S. Congress 2017). This CG LE authority is special as it pertains to the high seas and other waters over which the United States has jurisdiction, but what is particularly noteworthy is that the authority resides with the individual qualified commissioned, warrant or petty officer (E-4 and above), also referred to as the boarding officer and is valid, regardless of the platform from which they are launched. Internally, the task organization of LE assets with end game capability is grouped into surface cutters and specialized LE teams. The individual deployed cutter works directly for JIATF-S or their respective area commander, depending on the area of responsibility, but their daily patrols and routine is largely driven by the commanding officer of the unit. In some situations cutters also "serve as Command and Control (C2) "nodes" to coordinate the actions of multiple response assets—long-range patrol aircraft and fast-response long- range interceptor and over-the-horizon boats" (DHS 2013, 6). As previously stated, the surface asset cutter is such an integral piece of the layered strategy, their fixture within illicit narcotic interdicting strategy is solidified. The USCG will continue to value the surface cutter, but may not always have the funding to keep them operational. Deployable specialized teams offer a force-multiplying alternative.

The USCG has deployed specialized law enforcement teams (LEDETs) on board U.S. (DoD) naval vessels and Allied ships since the early 1980s with resounding success.

These tasked organized and tailorable for specific mission need teams, “are teams of on-call and globally deployable personnel and assets with specialized skills in maritime LE, joint operations, boat operations, port security, marine environmental protection, and chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and high-yield/enhanced-explosive (CBRNE) detection and response. They provide on-scene command and control” (DHS 2013, 14). The USCG’s partnership with the U.S. Navy has been invaluable in the current resourced constrained environment. As the lead agency/service in detection and monitoring of illicit trafficking in the Eastern Pacific and Caribbean, the U.S. Navy provides the resources, expertise, and in some cases, people power to get USCG boarding teams and LEDETS on target. However, as mentioned earlier, it is not just the U.S. Navy that deploys with specialized USCG teams. “Allied partners—in particular Canada, France, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom—are heavily involved in the region and actively participate in counternarcotics operations and international engagement” (U.S. President 2015, 25). It is specifically these types of relationships that ensure the USCG is able to expand its LE authority and competencies, interdict threats in the offshore zone, and improve security throughout the maritime domain (Bureau for International and Narcotics Law Enforcement Activities 2017, 45).

The aligning of USCG forces with partner nations is paramount. DHS counternarcotics doctrine clearly states, “we will collaborate with and support our federal, state, local, and tribal partners . . . we will create synergies through collaboration and cooperation with international partners” (DHS 2010, 1, 2). Furthermore, DHS doctrine elaborates by explaining that DHS, “will aggressively act to bring state, local, and tribal counternarcotic LE entities into a full partnership with the federal

counternarcotic enterprise” (DHS 2010, 7). True collaboration requires more than just placing specialized forces on board Allied/partner nation platforms to conduct USCG LE. It requires the sharing of policies, information, and best practices. The 2016 *National Southwest Border Counternarcotic Strategy* states it best when describing the extent of the sharing process:

Efforts to improve information sharing processes, procedures, and technology among Federal, state, local, tribal, and international partners will continue to expand the scope, quality, and timeliness of actionable and strategic information. Institutionalizing this progress and further standardizing information sharing processes may require new agreements or updating existing agreements. Agencies are committed to improving coordination and communication among all existing fusion centers over the next 24 months. (Office of National Drug Control Policy 2016, 20)

While keeping the strategic goal at the forefront of USCG planning, it becomes apparent that a collaborative approach with partner nations deep in the departure, transit, and offshore zones make the most sense. It is in these areas where the contraband is most vulnerable and where it is furthest from U.S. shores. A focused collaborative approach, where partner nations and their LE capability are in synch ensures regional success. “By facilitating operational communications and enabling USCG LE officers to stop, board and search vessels suspected of illicit maritime activity, these agreements deter smugglers from using another nation’s vessel and or territorial seas as a haven from law enforcement efforts” (Bureau for International and Narcotics Law Enforcement Affairs 2017, 45). The USCG, as organized within the maritime trident offers surface asset response, deployable specialized LE capabilities, and strong international partnerships that answer the national strategic call of an integrated maritime enterprise.

## Leadership

The USCG has traditionally excelled in the practice of what the U.S. Army refers to as mission command. An organizational environment where individual units or commanding officers are given the latitude to make decisions based on the commanders intent and within the bounds of disciplined initiative, it is the perfect blend of the art of command and science of control. As an everyday practice and common business rule within the USCG cutter, aviation, and specialized LE forces community, very few lessons learned have been written on the topic. Substantial literature that addressed the mission command concept as it relates to the USCG directly could not be found. However, looking outward to the DoD, a written assessment of how and why JIATFS is so successful was discovered. In the master's thesis by Keith Robinson, he explains (taken from Munsing and Lamb study) three variables leading to JIATF-S success: purpose, empowerment, and support. In simplified text, the three variables break down into the following descriptions:

Purpose – Well- defined goals are essential to any organization, but purpose is more than a defining mission statement.

Empowerment – JIATFS agencies retain administrative and operational control over any assets assigned to JIATF, while working without written agreements between agencies. This enables agencies to work toward a commonly defined purpose without the micro-management that often accompanies coordinating tactics.

Support - JIATF-South exists to support and coordinate agencies and their resources and does not take credit for their individual successes. (Robinson 2014, 40)

Although JIATF-S is a DoD command, it is traditionally led by a USCG admiral director, and the joint organization just seems to work. Former director and now current Vice Commandant of the Coast Guard, Admiral Michel expressed, JIATF-S is “the most

effective and efficient counter- illicit trafficking, detection, monitoring and law enforcement organization the planet has ever known” (Miles 2012). JIATFS models established counternarcotics doctrine where “Command and control elements tie intelligence, planning, operational employment, and law enforcement response into an optimized whole,” an effective strategy that ensures individual agencies, units, and partners are able to bring their unique capabilities to the fight (DHS 2010, 9). “In doing so, they harmonize the activities of multiple organizations working toward a common objective while respecting the authorities of each of the participant organizations” (DHS 2010, 9). With the USCG-led JIATFS as a guide and the USCG’s common business rules of executing mission command throughout the organization, little can be improved upon with regards to organization leadership. However, the study does draw attention to an area where the USCG may look toward improving.

DHS counternarcotics doctrine recommends the “establishment and use of standard forums for capturing and sharing best practices and lessons learned” (DHS 2010, 10). The USCG currently captures counternarcotic operational lessons learned in the form of deployment summaries as previously mentioned. Although read and reviewed by the area commander, area chief of operations and their respective staffs, there is not an organized forum to come together as a group (including the cutter commanding officers/operations officers, air station commanding officers/air station operations boss, and LEDET officer-in-charge) to discuss counternarcotic strategy as it pertains to policy and tactics. Each respective group meets annually to discuss tactics, resourcing, maintenance, and training issues as they related to their own branch but there is no cohesive meeting under the premise of counternarcotic policy and operations. A forum of

such nature should also include representative from JIATF-S and agencies within DHS, as well as well as Allied and partner nations. Additionally, an annual or bi-annual (every two year) counternarcotic policy and operations forum would ensure the coalition force was current in understanding the problem (as the operational environment changes) and adaptable as an enterprise to make necessary changes. “Measuring outcomes is critical to our understanding of the correlation between enforcement activity and interdiction performance targets. To be useful, outcome measurements must assist us in identifying effective procedures and practices. This in turn will help us identify appropriate resource requirements, personnel levels, and focus areas” (DHS 2010, 10).

#### Way Forward

In reviewing the complete set of literature, the author recommends three areas for continued research as they pertain to counternarcotic operations:

1. LE assets with stop, board, search, and seize authority on the water (or in the air) are critical to interdiction success in the offshore zone. DHS and USCG doctrine prescribes it, and the USCG has been tasked organized through the deployment of cutters, aircraft, and LEDETs in operations area to support it. The initial recommendation that more assets are the answer to increasing success may not be valid. The USCG needs to continue to research ways the assets available (when deployed) can be used more effectively through increased patrol periods, downrange USCG operated depot maintenance stations/teams, and continued partnerships in the region (increased LEDET deployments on all available surface assets).

2. Continued focus on regional partnerships is an investment that will continue to pay dividends as trusted relationship build. The USCG should continue to look into ways to involve partner nations in every aspect and level of counternarcotic operations, to include increased ship-rider agreements, partner nation deployment engagements (operate as joint surface action groups), and USCG extended in-country maritime LE training.
3. The DHS/USCG should establish, host, support, and/or fund (partial or in whole) a Western Hemisphere counternarcotic policy, operations, and tactics forum to gain a sense for the current operational environment, build on regional partnerships, document lessons learned, and produce a common regional vision for counternarcotic operations.

#### Feasible, Acceptable, Suitable Analysis

As stated previously, FAS can be used within the force management field to assess the validity of a strategy or proposition. Broken down in this context each component answers the following:

Feasible: can be achieved within reasonable resource constraints.

Acceptable: the concept can be supported by all major stakeholders.

Suitable: accomplishes the mission or meets the requirement within the framework of reasonable operations. (Long 2016)

In a review of recent literature from the fleet, to include a master's thesis by a former USCG cutter commanding officer and operations staff officer, and recent cutter deployment summaries from the Eastern Pacific, the conclusion is that the recommendations meet the FAS criteria as seen through a stakeholder's eye. Captain

Ramassini concurs with all three of the recommendations, and even offers a few ways to decrease overall costs. To the first and second recommendations, he mentions, leveraging national fleet resources, USCG and Navy counter drug refresher training out of Guantanamo Bay Naval Base, expanded USCG LEDET, and airborne use of force programs, and even U.S. submarines deployed to U.S. Southern Command area of responsibility. Additionally, he sees the added value in placing oilers in Eastern Pacific and Caribbean as a force multiplier and benefits of overall improved interoperability with partner nations. He ultimately recommends increasing the interdiction asset presence by providing specialized capabilities like fast response cutters, LEDET's, and airborne use of force coupled with information sharing (Ramassini 2015, 39-42). The commanding officer of USCGC *Waesche* makes similar recommendations in his recent deployment summary. "It is my strong opinion that a USNS oiler including AUF capable MH-60 and LEDET would be very beneficial in the EPAC AOR, in addition to keeping the surface assets supplied, fueled and on station longer, an oiler with the CD package would be itself a very capable surface asset" (CO USCGC *Waesche* 2016c, 14). In reference to multiple casualties on critical systems to include small boats and auxiliary salt water systems (one of their tactical small boats was out of commission for 49/109 days), Captain Hendrickson explains "reliability of cutter boats during standard NSC length patrols, coupled with logistic challenges in the JIATF OPAREA continues to be a concern," and recommends an option similar to down range maintenance facilities. (CO USCGC *Waesche* 2016, 14). "This is additional evidence of the value of increased organic training and including ships personnel in depot level repairs normally conducted by OEM technicians" (CO USCGC *Waesche* 2016, 8). This could be completed shore

side at partner nation facilities, manned and operated by USCG depot level maintainers. The increased costs associated with the recommendation to increase cutter patrol durations or develop depot level maintenance facilities down range is mitigated through increased partnerships, meeting all three FAS components. “combating TOCs will require proactive engagement with domestic and international partners to identify, target and defeat the threat” (Ramassini 2015, 38).

As shown, recent fleet literature reveals certain commonalities, regarding the best way forward. There is a wealth of knowledge distributed amongst the tactical operators (cutter commanding officer, current and future area operations chiefs, LEDETS, and partner/allied nation participants), and general counternarcotic stakeholders. The recommendations put forth generally pass FAS analysis but the third and final recommendation to establish a Western Hemisphere counternarcotic policy, operations and tactics forum (assuming stakeholder buy-in), is the most feasible and suitable. It has the most potential to drive operations in the region, it meets the recommendations set forth in doctrine, organization, and leadership, but most importantly, it may result in the most positive change. Captain Ramassini may have said it best, “The USCG should seek to maximize returns on investment through commitment to an escalated maritime interdiction strategy” (Ramassini 2015, 38). How should the USCG best develop that strategy?

### Army Design Methodology

In a brief recap, ADM is a structured process to ensure staffs and their commanders keep to task as they navigate a complex problem. The process is broken down into three frames: the operational frame (current and desired state), the problem

frame, and the solution frame (or operational approach). When executed properly, ADM clearly defines the current state and desired future state, identifies the obstacles preventing the organization from achieving the desired state, and facilitates a solution or recommended way forward. It requires the collaboration of subject matter experts within a team, and adherence to five primary fundamentals: apply critical thinking, understand the operational environment, solve the right problem, adapt to dynamic conditions, and achieve designated goals. The five principals are of equal importance and without each individual component; it is difficult to realize the full potential of the others. The complexity, however, involved in attempting to fully understand the environment and solve the right problem is really at the epicenter of the ADM process. A miscalculation here results in no actionable product.

Take for instance the most recent data from the INSCR (highlighted in chapter 2 literature review), the USCG observed a 32 percent increase in cocaine removal quantities from 2015-2016 while expending 100 less cutter days, 100 less LEDET deployment days, and an astonishing 900 less surveillance aircraft hours. With cocaine prices in the United States remaining fairly steady due to controlled and steady supply shipments from South America, and results of subjective partner nation relationships very difficult to quantify from year to year, the author is at a loss for why the data reveals what it does; that a decrease in assets in theatre resulted in a 32 percent increase in cocaine (metric ton) seizure totals.

Despite the 32 percent increase in seizure totals, the day to day down range operations are becoming seemingly less and less effective (at a tactical level). During my last five counternarcotic deployments to the Eastern Pacific from 2014-2016 (greater than

350 total days engaged in operations), it felt as though the narcotic DTOs were exploiting our weaknesses before we (USCG/U.S. government) could mitigate them. Specifically, I was personally involved in boarding opportunities (some resulted in cocaine seizures and the others did not) where it appeared as though the smugglers only marginally attempted to evade interdiction. When a suspect vessel is stopped and the procedures for boarding and conducting LE action are commenced, certain situations can add to the complexity of the case. The claimed nationality of the vessel, departure port, claimed destination port, and most importantly, the claimed nationality of the captain and crew have significant jurisdictional implications that require the U.S. government to engage each specific claimed nation state in order to verify the claim. Due to the complexity of these varying nationality claims, the legal process, to include the implementation of bilateral agreements with partner nations, requires very detailed briefings. With delayed, and in some cases, nonexistent communication with the respective partner nation, the boarding procedure can take anywhere from a few hours to literally days. In that time, the mother unit (USCG cutter/U.S. Navy/or Allied force ship) is engaged and generally unavailable to conduct other missions. DTOs understand the United States sends a limited number of surface ships to the operational area, and sending crews with varying nationalities is a tactic used to occupy resources. In a hypothetical scenario where the United States has five surface assets in the operational area, the DTOs could send 20 small smuggling boats with the planned intention of five being interdicted in order to strategically occupy interdiction resources. What is the USCG's counter to this tactic? Did the USCG understand that DTO tactics were changing early enough to make a necessary change in tactics and procedures?

Similarly, there is a growing trend in the observance of medical care/prescription medicine dependent smuggling boat captains and crews that further occupy and stretch the operational capability of an interdicting unit. USCG Captain Hendrickson noted in his 2016 Eastern Pacific Deployment Summary, “these crewmembers deploy with just enough medicine to get them from departure zone to arrival zone. However, when their movement is disrupted by a JIATF-S asset (seizing it) and they become detained personnel, the surface asset is left with the challenge of how to deal with their medical conditions” (CO USCGC *Waesche* 2016, 13). The U.S. surface assets that routinely operate in the operational area are capable of up to level II medical care (dependent on type and size of vessel), but would require medical evacuation to a level III facility if warranted. It is apparent that this too, is a tactic used by DTOs to challenge and occupy our resources. The DTOs, aware of the capabilities and humanitarian focused tactics, techniques, and procedures, and will continue to look for ways to exploit weakness.

The original intentions were to set out and solve the counternarcotic operations problem by working through portions of DOTMPLF and ADM, and to offer tactical, concrete recommendations for a way forward. General recommendations from the literature review provided the stakeholders view as FAS. In navigating this process however, the author has concluded that the USCG (partner nations/other agencies included) may not truly understand the problem. Certainly, any attempt on the part of the author to solve the right problem extends far beyond professional experience and the literature review. “Today’s operational environment presents situations so complex that understanding them, let alone attempting to change them, is beyond the ability of a single individual” (School of Advanced Military Studies 2016, 126-127). In reviewing the

recommended ways forward, they all have merit, but the third recommendation, to establish a Western Hemisphere counternarcotic policy, operations and tactics forum has the most potential and deserves the most attention and consideration. If executed properly with an ADM approach, it will drive the whole of USCG counternarcotics way forward.

## CHAPTER 5

### FINAL RECOMMENDATION/CONCLUSION

After a literature review into past, current, and future counternarcotics literature through the lens of DOL, a brief dive into ADM, and a stakeholders' analysis, the answer to the question—can the USCG be more effective at maritime counternarcotic operations in the Eastern Pacific and Caribbean by applying ADM to the problem set—is simply, yes. The author is not convinced the USCG fully understands the current operational environment.

#### Recommendations for the Chief Decision Maker

In the short term the USCG, specifically Pacific and Atlantic Area should continue to look into ways to increase deployed surface asset efficiency in the operational area. The following options are recommended:

1. Increase cutter deployment periods to ensure effective use of cutter deployment days. Increasing the duration of the deployment minimizes the transit time required to deploy to and from the operational area (for surface assets that make three to four deployments a year to the same area) saving the USCG days and even weeks (for the Pacific Northwest homeported cutters) in transit days, that could be more efficiently applied to operations.

2. Recruit, train, and deploy more LEDETs onboard all available U.S.

Navy/Allied and USCG vessels. The LEDET program is an exceptional force multiplier, with teams participating in direct LE and advanced LE training.

Recommend looking into ways to ingrate LEDETs into in country training

teams that provide technical and training support on a regular basis. The status of current international training teams should be reviewed, as they may not be at capacity. Having served on multiple LEDETs, one can be assured that advanced training support from these specialized teams is valued added.

3. Conduct a comprehensive lessons-learned from the first three years of the *Western Hemisphere Strategy* and publish the results. The discussion generated from a published lessons-learned document alone will be worth the endeavor and will be a starting point for framing the operational environment (long-term recommendation to follow).

Surface asset efficiency is of vital importance as noted in the first two short-term recommendations, and change does not happen over-night. There are two specific recommendations that will take time to research, develop, and implement. They are offered at a three- to five-year outlook. Recommend the USCG develop a downrange maintenance capability to service cutters (U.S. Navy and Allied ships to a capacity funding will allow), their small boats, and helicopters while deployed to the operational area. Out of commission days are costly, especially when the full LE package (consisting of surface asset, helicopter, and small boat) are required for optimal interdiction. Units routinely make unscheduled port visits in logistically challenged partner nation ports to acquire repair parts and even external tech support. A fully functional USCG maintenance team established in a logistics friendly nation would ensure a stockpile of common parts, a maintenance repair shop, on call technicians, and most importantly, an available hub for surface assets in need of support. Ideally a streamlined maintenance pit stop would minimize the time a partially mission capable unit would be off line. A

deployed U.S. Navy oiler or resupply ship with helicopter flight deck capabilities and available housing for additional personnel in terms of friendly or suspected smugglers/detainees might be a viable and less costly option.

The final recommendation moving forward is that the USCG, DHS, and partner nations bring together the leading counternarcotic experts in their respective fields for a focused ADM working group. The vision is an ADM meeting of all key players, facilitated by a group of ADM experts, to include Army strategists who may not have previously been exposed to the counter narcotics threat. The mission task associated with such a meeting would be a consolidated brief and written document outlining the three primary frames of ADM (operational environment/future environment, problem frame, and operational approach). See Appendix A for abbreviated example. The USCG, DHS, and partner nations are operating with limited resources in a constrained environment against an enemy with unlimited funding. The author is confident that a dedicated Western Hemisphere counternarcotic policy, operations and tactics forum through an ADM working group could formulate an operational approach to be even more efficient in operations.

Stopping 100 percent of the illicit contraband from reaching U.S. shores is an impossible goal, but gaining a better understanding of the operational environment, defining a collaborative end state, identifying the obstacles preventing success and developing a combined way forward is a real possibility.

#### Recommendations for Further Study

During the literature review of the INSCR (highlighted in chapter 2 literature review), it was note that there was a discrepancy in the interdiction to assets results ratio

where from 2015-2016, the USCG observed a 32 percent increase in cocaine removal quantities while expending drastically less operational area deployment cutter days and aircraft surveillance hours. So many factors contribute to a successful seizure, and the complex nature and interworking relationships of counternarcotic operations deserves a focused dive. The reason for this above astonishing statistic is unknown. Recommend a small focus group or independent study directed solely at the statics associated with USCG efforts and resulting cocaine removal quantities from 2015-2016.

Expanding partnerships is an integral piece of the counternarcotic enterprise, but the direct results of expanded partnership efforts is extremely difficult to quantify. Recommend an in-depth study into the designated partnership programs in the Western Hemisphere to include interagency and partner nations and their effectiveness.

In line with expanding partnerships, the concept of information sharing protocols deserves a dedicated study as well. Information exchange protocols, intelligence sharing, and ship riding programs facilitate true partnership but at times can compromise security. Recommend an independent thesis by an intelligence officer that poses the risks, benefits, and potential way forward as it relates intelligence sharing as it facilitates true partnerships in the region.

### Personal Learning Reflections

A great deal was learned in this yearlong professional study at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College. The Master of Military Art and Science thesis process can be an enjoyable experience with proper planning, selection of the right committee, and persistence in research and writing. Dr. Kenneth Long helped tremendously in seeing the value of the professional applied case study research

methodology, where personal experience and judgement is applied on par with a literature review to formulate an educated conclusion and informed recommendation. Professional applied case study research ensures the “researcher can proceed to engage the CDM within the context of an acceptable model for purposes of making progress within the tightly scoped problem and leave to other researchers the inquiry into improving, validating, or critiquing the professional standards of practice being employed” (Long 2016).

There is much appreciation for exposure to ADM throughout the duration of the resident course and master’s thesis research. The concepts, processes, and critical thinking skills required to conduct ADM will be brought to the USCG. ADM is significant on two levels, as it improves staff critical thinking and improves decision-making. It is a process that is undeniably worth it.

## APPENDIX A

### ARMY DESIGN METHODOLOGY ABBREVIATED EXAMPLE

ADM requires group brainstorming and relies on multiple participants with unique skill sets, backgrounds, and experiences that inevitably lead to varying ways of viewing a problem. ADM is not intended to be conducted by a single individual but in order to depict what ADM may look like the following example categorized by each frame is presented.

#### Framing an Operational Environment

Current environment: South American DTOs continue to ship narcotics in large quantities (over 100 kilograms) north bound via maritime routes into Central America and Mexico for transfer to Mexican cartels. Nearly all the narcotics produced in South America and shipped via maritime routes is destined for the United States. USCG deploys surface assets (in support of JIATF-S operations) to the Eastern Pacific and Caribbean to counter the narcotics threat.

Future environment: An observed decrease in narcotic shipments (maritime) combined with an increase in maritime interdiction annual totals. A true measure of success is an increase in the average market value (in the United States) of one kilogram of cocaine.

#### Framing the Problem

South American cartels continue to advise new tactics to evade LE. Specifically, the use of fully submersible (submarines) is a growing trend in narcotic smuggling tactics. To date, U.S./Allied and partner nation LE teams have only seized/confiscated

these fully submersible vessels in mid construction, however credible data suggests fully submersible vessels are in operation and capable of smuggling in excess of 100 tons of cocaine per vessel.

#### Framing The Solution/Operational Approach

Develop new tactics, techniques, and procedures in conjunction with the U.S. Navy to include Special Forces teams in order to combat this emerging threat. The U.S. Navy is a leading force in subsurface operations, tracking and engagement, and their expertise in conjunction with USCG counternarcotics experience and LE authority may lead to an effective fully submersible interdiction tactic.

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